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**NEWS RELEASE**

## **Hoping to give root to other efficiencies, City of El Paso streamlines irrigation work orders**

**Lean Six Sigma scrutiny ups efficiency by more than 90 percent, serves as guide for other processes**

**EL PASO, Texas** – Lessons learned in streamlining the way city maintenance crews fix irrigation systems will serve as a guide for reducing waste and increasing efficiency for other city maintenance functions. Irrigation work which once took 24 hours to complete, now takes less than two hours.

As part of a Lean Six Sigma project, a team of city employees examined the life cycle of irrigation maintenance requested for city parks – determining how they go from request to reality. Their goal was improving efficiency by 33 percent. Ultimately, however, they increased efficiency by 92 percent. Now, the work turns to seeking efficiencies in similar processes.

"We knew we needed to increase efficiency in completing work orders to have more time for preventative maintenance," said Joel McKnight, assistant director of the Parks and Recreation Department, who also lead the team. "We selected irrigation work because we felt it would give us data we could use to build other process improvements across the organization and replicate the efficiencies we found."

As a result of the findings, several unnecessary steps were eliminated from the process. Additionally, the team discovered that more than two-thirds of all the irrigation work done by city crews involves replacing irrigation heads or valves.

"That changed the way we stock out trucks before our crews roll out in the morning," McKnight said. "We also instituted a 'Tool Runner' position, meaning if a crew finds they need something which isn't on their truck, they just call it in and the tool is on its way; rather than having to stop work and travel to pick up a single tool."

The findings of the project were presented to El Paso City Council today.

Scrutinizing existing processes through the Lean Six Sigma process is part of the City of El Paso's commitment to setting the standard for sound governance and fiscal management by seeking to deliver services timely and efficiently while focusing on continual improvement.

Other Six Sigma projects which have been presented to council has reduced the amount of time it takes members of the public to reserve park facilities and increase the efficiency of city pot-hole patching crews.

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